

MSHSLconnect

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League debuts online state tournament programs



A longtime state tournament staple had a new twist when Minnesota State High School League tournaments got underway last month. When the Debate State Tournament kicked off the League's winter events, an online state tournament program made its debut.

The crisp, new look-online program contains all the same features that fans, media and other stakeholders need in following all the tournament action. Need to know when and where games and

contests are being played and held? The brackets and comprehensive tournament schedules will guide the way. Need to know who qualified? Nope, that hasn't gone away, either. Section champions, complete with a team photo and team information will be centerpieces of many state tournament programs.

The online state tournament programs are available on the League's website and are free of charge. For each state tournament, an edition will be available at least 24 hours prior to the start of an event. Following the conclusion of a state tournament, an updated post-tournament edition will be available. Both editions will include links to the League's new front-facing website and archives of that particular activity.

The online programs can be found here:

<https://www.mshsl.org/state-tournament-programs>

"The League is really excited to unveil these new-look programs to all that follow our state tournament events," said Tim Leighton, the League's Communications Coordinator. "What makes this service truly unique is that the League will be producing a program with all of your informational needs prior to a tournament, and then coming back with an updated edition that captures the incredible experience of participating in a state tournament."

All the online state tournament programs will be located on a landing page on the League's website that continues to grow in providing tools and services to the more than 500 member schools.

"The ongoing rebuild of the MSHSL website provides a growing opportunity to share information about the participation opportunities and accomplishments that students across Minnesota have," said Laura Mackenthun, the League's Director of Technology. "It's exciting that highlights from the website will be linked from the online program to provide further enhancements to this new format."

Students need caring adults during COVID-19

By Jody Redman



COVID-19 has created a significant disruption in students' lives and has affected them beyond just the risk of getting sick. Where schools certainly provide students with learning experiences, it is also a place where they are connected to their peers and caring adults through social experiences, sports, and activities. The pandemic and a shutdown of these experiences has drastically impacted many students' social, emotional and mental well-being.

Most students' school life is now filled with virtual meetings, distance learning, and non-existent social connections. A 17-year-old, high school student described her experience like this, "We still have the learning part of school including all of the pressures of tests and assignments, but it is without any of the fun. Our days are isolated and filled with long and boring Zoom lectures, assignments that are sent to us at all hours of the day and night and electronic classrooms where everyone has their cameras turned off. I feel so disconnected and alone. I just want things to go back the way they were." The pandemic has stolen the traditional experience called school. Graduations, proms, football games and pep fests have been canceled and won't resume until the pandemic is under control. The pandemic and loss of meaningful connection is causing an increase in mental health concerns for students.

A recent survey conducted by The Harris Poll to explore teens' perceptions and experiences around mental health, and COVID-19, provided these shocking results.

- 81 percent of teens say mental health is a significant issue for young people in the U.S., and 64 percent of teens believe that the experience of COVID-19 will have a lasting impact on their generation's mental health.
- In this stressful climate, 7 in 10 teens have experienced struggles with mental health.
- 55 percent of teens say they've experienced anxiety, 45 percent excessive stress, and 43 percent depression.
- 61 percent of teens said that COVID-19 pandemic has increased their feelings of loneliness.
- Teens today report spending 75 percent of their waking hours on screens during COVID-19.
- 82 percent of teens calling on America to talk more openly and honestly about mental health issues in this country.
- 79 percent of teens surveyed wish there was an inclusive environment or safe space for people in school to talk about mental health.

According to the Harris Poll, "COVID is definitely impacting our students. When they become overloaded with stress it can lead to problems such as anxiety, aggression, isolation, depression, physical illness, and poor coping skills, such as alcohol or drug use. Letting them know that it is OK to struggle creates space needed for them to talk about what they are struggling with."

Students need caring adults in their lives to help them navigate the ever-changing landscape and the challenges that this pandemic has presented. The Search Institute found that the single most important factor in a student's ability to face challenging events is a consistent relationship with an adult that supports and believes in them. Athletic and activity programs, and their coaches and advisors, hold a key role in providing students with the care that they so desperately need.

As caring adults, we must set our intentions every day, and have a plan to assist the students who we are charged with supporting. Check in with them often and watch and listen for signs that they are struggling. Students may show signs of concern with symptoms such as:

- Being more irritable or easily annoyed than usual.
- Disengagement and not acting like the person you know.
- Lashing out.
- Avoiding their friends.
- Sleeping too much or not sleeping enough.
- Overeating or not eating enough.
- Not enjoying the experiences they usually do.

Classroom and gymnasium doors have closed, and students have had an increased need for connection. Be intentional by reaching out to the students on your team. Check in with your students to see how they are doing and provide them with the support they need to deal with the stress of COVID-19.

Lee, McDonald to be recognized for media service

During 45TV's coverage of the girls and boys basketball tournaments in April, Dave Lee of WCCO-AM and Mitchell Palmer McDonald of the Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder will be recognized with the Minnesota State High School League's Outstanding Media Service Award. The award recognizes outstanding coverage and service to the participants, members schools and their communities.



Lee, the recipient in the Electronic Division, has covered high school activities for 32 years for WCCO-AM Radio and 45TV. He is retiring from his iconic morning show on April 30.



In the Print Division, McDonald will be recognized for his 34 years of coverage for InSight News and the Minnesota Spokesman Recorder.

The Minnesota State High School League thanks all media partners for their coverage of League activities.

Past winners:

2015 Dave Harris, Alexandria

2016 Wally Wakefield, Lillie News, Maplewood

2017

Print Division: Mike Bialka, Brainerd Daily Dispatch

Electronic Division: Craig Olson, Fergus Falls

2018

Print Division: John Sherman, Sun Newspapers

Electronic Division: Bill Bentson, KFIL Radio, Preston

2019

Print Division: Tom Elliott, St. Cloud Times

Electronic Division: Jim Bartels, KNUJ Radio, New Ulm

Walsh retires after 20 years of service to League's member schools

Longtime League administrative assistant Yvonne Walsh ended more than 20 years of service to member schools when she retired on Jan. 29, 2021.



Walsh, a familiar voice the past two decades in greeting media and member school representatives, began her League career in August of 2000 as a receptionist and assistant in numerous other roles. For the past 13 years, she has served as an administrative assistant in, among many other areas, accounts receivable, invoicing and media credentials.

"Without a doubt, Yvonne leaves an incredible legacy of service to the League's member schools," said Tim Leighton, the League's Communications Coordinator. "For example, her work with the media was always at a gold-medal standard. For many years, she brought calm to media members as she patiently worked with them through the credentials process and the necessary steps to ensure a positive experience while they covered our state tournament events. The media are longtime fans of Yvonne. She is an all-star in their books."

For many years, Walsh has also played a key role in ensuring the awards that are presented at state tournament events are to the highest standards of quality. Long before championship trophies are thrust in the air or medals are presented to participants, Walsh meticulously inspected every award to ensure the state tournament experience is not marred by any flaws in the treasured keepsakes.

"I believe the most important thing during my time with the League was to provide high quality customer service," Walsh said. "I appreciated so much working with the member schools, the media, the region secretaries and the public. I appreciate so much the relationships that were built. I do wish that I had been able to meet everyone that I had spoken with over the years. Working with everyone has been a great source of joy."

Sponsor Spotlight

State tournaments are a ball thanks to these sponsors

As we continue to salute our corporate sponsors, we shine the spotlight on the ball/equipment companies that provide balls, pucks, and other supplies/apparel for our state tournaments. We call these types of sponsorships ball adoption agreements. Nearly every high school association has similar multi-year agreements.

In addition to providing the League with playing equipment at no cost, the companies listed below also provide financial support for our events. We are grateful to these ball/equipment manufacturers who year-after-year invest in high school activity programs.

Official State Tournament Balls/Equipment

Note: Under the terms of the ball adoption agreements, the League is required to use all balls/pucks during state tournament play. Sections and subsections are strongly encouraged to use the products. Schools have the option of using the products during regular season.



Baseball: Wilson A1010

Girls & Boys Tennis: Wilson US Open Extra Duty



Girls & Boys Basketball: Spalding TF-1000 Legacy (wide channel)

Football: Spalding Alpha Football



Girls Softball: Dudley Softball (4H311Y)



Girls Volleyball: Baden VX5EC-220 Perfection, Blue/White/Grey



Girls & Boys Hockey: Bauer provides pucks for the girls' and boys' hockey tournaments



Girls & Boys Soccer: SELECT Royale Ball

do you know?

1

True or False? The football semifinals were moved into the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome for the first time in the fall of 1990.

2

In a 1990 poll of high school students, what was their top expectation of coaches and activities directors?

3

In that same poll, what was the top expectation that coaches and activities administrators had of students?

4

In its action on Nov. 15, 1990, who did the League's Board of Directors approve nomination to the national high school (NFHS) hall of fame?

5

Where were the two locations for the girls softball state tournament in 1991?

Answers on page 5



Efforts underway to increase pool of Certified Music Judges

By Mark Gitch, *Director of Orchestras, Wayzata High School*

There has rarely, if ever, been a year where Minnesota has had too many League-certified adjudicators for its music contests. While Minnesota is blessed with an abundance of qualified educators and musicians, convincing them to become certified by the League has been a challenge. Unlike sport officials, who are likely to officiate many games in a season, a music adjudicator may work only one or two contests in a year, making the time and expense associated with certification less attractive. Nevertheless, it is important that we encourage music educators to pursue certification so that our contests are more likely to produce consistent, equitable and meaningful outcomes for our students.

The definition of adjudication is "a formal judgment." At a music contest, adjudicators are comparing what they hear from the performers to what they see printed in the music, assessing performances for both accuracy and the persuasiveness of artistic intent. Each adjudicator brings her/his own strengths, limitations, and experiences to the adjudication process, which is why the common ground of training certification is so important. Such training may not make the recipient a better musician or a better educator, though these may be byproducts, but instead will help the adjudicator develop a grounded approach to scoring and feedback that suits the unique circumstances of a music contest. Ideally each adjudicator will provide a critique offering both positive remarks and constructive comment -- built on an awareness of MSHSL expectations, local expectations, and contest rules -- that motivates participating students to pursue further growth as developing musicians.

Preparing for contest is a time-consuming endeavor for students and their teachers. Great judges can make or break the contest experience. Those who have the greatest positive impact understand a student's - and a school program's - need to have consistency in scoring and clarity in feedback. It is also important for adjudicators to understand that while opinions of what constitutes a "good" performance will always vary somewhat, it's still possible to create largely shared expectations across sites or across panels of judges. In addition, adjudicators need to know when to give a "perfect" score and when to acknowledge that a performance is falling short of the composer's intent - without building up or bruising the student's self-worth inappropriately.

Adjudicating broadens the judge's own knowledge of what's happening in other schools and exposes them to new repertoire, an invaluable tool for developing one's own program.

The League began a partnership with the NFHS this fall, moving certification for music adjudicators online for the first time. In addition, the League is waiving the fee for training this year to encourage a broader pool of music educators to complete the training. For the good of all music students and programs in Minnesota, members schools are encouraged to promote music adjudicator certification.

There is still time to register in time for spring contests that will be in a virtual format. For more information on becoming a music judge, see

<https://www.mshsl.org/officials-judges/fine-arts-judges>

Mark Gitch is a longtime Solo and Ensemble contest manager, a certified contest judge and serves on the League's Music Advisory Committee.

Fine Arts Spotlight



Debate: The 120th annual State Debate Tournament was held virtually on Jan. 15 and 16 with competitors representing 41 member schools. Minneapolis South's Gabe Chang-Deutsch and Clara Conry were repeat champions in Policy. State champions in the other three categories are Alexandra Smith of East Ridge in Congressional; Arush Iyer of Eagan in Lincoln-Douglas; and Joshua Enebo and Skylar Wang of The Blake School in Public Forum.

Music: The League's Music Advisory Committee met in a virtual meeting on Jan. 21. The group received an update on the HeartOut platform that will be used for virtual music section contests beginning on March 1. Ten of the 16 administrative regions will be using the contest platform. Additional learning and tutorials prior to the contests will be offered by the League and HeartOut for directors, region administrators and adjudicators. The committee also discussed surveying music directors about updating the current scoring rubric and interest in a state-level festival or contest.

One Act Play: Member schools are uploading videos for this season's virtual sub-section and section competitions. Productions are being created and filmed either through videoconference formats or through in-person shows with safety precautions in place. Oral critiques and awards for the State Festival will be streamed on the afternoon of Saturday, Feb. 13. Because the events are not being held in person, some schools are preparing to perform in front of a small local audience, or to stream their shows online.

Speech: Coaches throughout the state are preparing for their season of invitationals. Many are planning on virtual-only meets, with some hoping and planning for small in-person events. The postseason format for section and state speech is being determined, with input from the Speech Advisory Committee.

Visual Arts: There were more than 2,000 submissions to the Minnesota Scholastic Art Awards competition this year. The judging took place virtually on Jan. 9, using separate Zoom rooms for adjudicating the artwork in their respective categories. The awards ceremony will take place on Feb. 27 at 2 p.m., as a live Facebook event and will be facilitated by the Weisman Art Museum under the direction Jamee Yung, The Weisman's Director of Education.



This note was sent to the League by Michelle Holt of the Minnesota Girls Gymnastics Officials Association. The group has been recognized by the Minnesota State High School League as an association of excellence.

I wanted to write to you about my experience judging my first meet of this much-anticipated gymnastics season between Hastings and North St. Paul. The Hastings Armory facility was immaculate; you could smell the cleaning solutions, in a good way.

The seating for the gymnasts was appropriately spaced, and for the Hastings team, marked with their names. Everyone (gymnasts, coaches, workers, TV personnel) were wearing their masks appropriately. The Hastings coaches encouraged social distancing when they felt their gymnasts were too close to each other.

Both teams did a great job! Jeanne Kasel and her staff showed great concern for following the guidelines set by the Minnesota Department of Health and the Minnesota State High School League. Jeanne and her coaches even presented each judge with our own snack bag that included a bottle of water! I was very thankful for Jeanne's adherence to the guidelines!

Selection Day an exciting time for League Officials

MSHSL Officials



Selection Day is an exciting one for numerous NCAA Tournament hopefuls as they learn whether their team will move on in their postseason journeys. Officials at all levels experience those same emotions when their name is called to serve as an official in the postseason. Similarly, the Minnesota State High School League also forms a selection committee to research, discuss and choose state tournament officials.

ROUNDUP

The committee for each sport consists of Regional/State Coordinators, the director of the sport and the Coordinator of Officials. In advance of the selection meeting, all officials that complete the State Tournament Tier requirements will complete a consideration form. This data is collected and shared with the committee for their consideration. The

committee members will also receive a list of officials recommended by the associations, coordinators and other staff. Observation data from the last five years is also shared for the committee's review.

Committee members are very professional and diligent in their preparation for the selection process. They carefully consider as few as 50 and as many as 800 applicants for a limited number of assignments. It is exhausting and challenging to make determinations on these initial assignments as many qualified, excellent officials will not be chosen for the tournament, including several who were eligible to come back after working in the tournament previously. There are only so many spots and the committee needs to be mindful of a variety of factors including recommendations from associations, member school feedback, geographical representation, our rotation policies, reports from observers, ability to cover the field for safety/game integrity, demonstration of excellent communication/game management experience and previous performance in the State Tournament. Reports from observers, recommendations from associations and previous experience are very highly regarded by the committee. Each committee has a goal to select 10 percent of officials to a round or event that they have not worked before. Consolation and third-place games provide great opportunities to bring in officials that are new to the tournament to observe how they perform prior to working championship bracket events

The committee makes the initial selections at the committee meeting, however, the process continues forward for several days and weeks as availability of officials is determined, teams qualify for the tournaments and seeding is completed. Officials are added prior to the tournament to replace injured or sick officials as well as those that have other commitments. In most cases, officials will not be placed on a specific assignment until the League knows which teams will compete in a particular round.

It is very common for officials to sit out for several years because we have many qualified candidates to choose from. In many instances, it is not indicative of capability if an official is not chosen, rather, it is the way the tournament field needed to be structured to fit for that year's tournament. It is disappointing for an official when they are not chosen for the state tournament. That disappointment tells us that officials are competitors and they want to be at their very best just like players and coaches. We always hope that officials press forward and use that disappointment to seek improvement in their craft for the next time around.

In the past, officials would receive a letter in the mail to deliver the great news that they would be working in the state tournament. In 2021, we use email but the emotional and positive triggers are still the same. It is a great feeling to be selected and officials should be proud of their accomplishment. Each committee is looking forward to providing those opportunities and smiles for officials for the winter tournaments and beyond!

quiz answers

Questions on page 3

1. True. Ten games were played over two days at the climate-controlled facility. Tickets were \$10 for adults and \$4 for students.
2. Don't show favoritism.
3. Be a positive example/role model for others.
4. Fridley's Jerry Seeman, a longtime official and educator.
5. Class A, Whitney Field, St. Cloud; Class AA, Community Park, Fridley.

Technology News

CHECK THIS OUT!

New on each Sport and Activity page, you will find three buttons across the top. Here you can find a list of the Schools with that activity, a link to the records page for that activity, and a link to the archive page with past state tournament information for that activity. On a few pages, these buttons will be added as those pages are completed.

Also, as state tournaments near, the corresponding Sport and Activity page is where you'll find links to Brackets, Schedules, Results and more!

Sponsor Salute



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